



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

United States Patent and Trademark Office

Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS

P.O. Box 1450

Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450

www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/518,597	12/21/2004	Gerard Laslaz	2901747-000009	2632
84331	7590	03/24/2009		
Baker Donelson Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC 555 Eleventh Street, NW, Sixth Floor Washington, DC 20004				
EXAMINER				
MORILLO, JANEL COMBS				
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		
1793				
MAIL DATE		DELIVERY MODE		
03/24/2009		PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/518,597

Applicant(s)

LASLAZ ET AL.

Examiner

Janelle Morillo

Art Unit

1793

Period for Reply -- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 February 2009.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 4, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22 and 23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 2, 4, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22 and 23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(c), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(c) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 2/23/2009 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-2, 4, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over SU 348633A (SU'633).

Concerning claim 1, which mentions the transitional phrase "consisting of", SU'633 teaches an aluminum casting part with good strength properties (abstract) formed from aluminum alloy with 6-8% Si, 0.5-0.9% Mg, 0.3-0.7% Cu, 0.05-0.2% Zr, 0.1-0.2% Ti, 0.1-0.2% Mn, which overlaps or touches the boundary of the presently claimed ranges of Si, Mg, Cu, Ti, Zr, Fe, Mn, Zn, and Ni of claims 1, 2, 4, 7-11, 15, 16, 18). SU'633 further teaches the addition of a minimum of 0.01% B, 0.005% Be, which fall within "other elements <0.10 each and 0.30 total". SU'633 teaches a minimum of 0.1% MM and 0.1% V, which is held to be a close approximation of <0.10% MM and <0.1% V (an alloy with 0.1% MM or V is expected to have substantially the

same properties as an alloy with 0.099% MM or 0.099% V, which falls within the instant claim). Further, the minimum total of other elements taught by SU'633 falls within the <0.30% total other elements limitation.

Amended claim 1 refers to "no vanadium is added to said alloy". However, as discussed below, the original specification or claims do not mention a maximum (impurity) of 0.03% V is intended by "no vanadium is added to said alloy", and said limitation is not read into the instant claim. Therefore, the examiner maintains her position that 0.1% V taught by SU'633, is held to be a close approximation of <0.1% V, which is allowed by the instantly amended claim language (an alloy with 0.1% V is expected to have substantially the same properties as an alloy with 0.099% V, which falls within the instant claim, same goes for MM). Additionally, the examiner points out that whether or not an element is intentionally added or present as an impurity, the instant claim allows "other elements < .10 each and 0.30 total".

A prima facie case of obviousness exists where the claimed ranges and prior art ranges do not overlap but are close enough that one skilled in the art would have expected them to have the same properties. *Titanium Metals Corp. of America v. Banner*, 778 F.2d 775, 227 USPQ 773 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (Court held as proper a rejection of a claim directed to an alloy of "having 0.8% nickel, 0.3% molybdenum, up to 0.1% iron, balance titanium" as obvious over a reference disclosing alloys of 0.75% nickel, 0.25% molybdenum, balance titanium and 0.94% nickel, 0.31% molybdenum, balance titanium.), see MPEP 2144.05.

Because SU'633 teaches alloying ranges that overlap or are a close approximation of the presently claimed alloy composition, it is held that SU'633 has created a prima facie case of obviousness of the presently claimed invention.

Overlapping ranges have been held to be a prima facie case of obviousness, see MPEP § 2144.05. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select any portion of the range, including the claimed range, from the broader range disclosed in the prior art, because the prior art finds that said composition in the entire disclosed range has a suitable utility. Additionally, "The normal desire of scientists or artisans to improve upon what is already generally known provides the motivation to determine where in a disclosed set of percentage

ranges is the optimum combination of percentages," In re Peterson, 65 USPQ2d at 1379 (CAFC 2003).

Concerning the equation in claims 6 and 20, SU'633 teaches ranges of Mg and Cu that meet said limitation.

Concerning product by process claim 12, SU'633 does not mention (in the translated parts) the heat treatment temper applied to said Al-Si alloy. However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to apply a peak strength T6 type temper to the alloy taught by SU'633 because said alloy is used for high strength manufacturing parts such as a diesel engine (abstract).

Concerning product claim 13, because SU'633 teaches said alloy is used for high strength heavy duty machinery body castings, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to cast the alloy taught by SU'633 into a cylinder head or crankcase, substantially as presently claimed.

Concerning claims 22 and 23, SU'633 does not specify the creep strain. However, because SU'633 teaches an overlapping alloy composition, foundry cast, and motivation to apply the instant heat treatment temper, then substantially the same creep resistance is expected for the alloy of SU'633 as for the instantly claimed alloy.

4. Claims 1-2, 4, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dulin (US 2,821,495A).

Concerning claim 1, which mentions the transitional phrase "consisting of", Dulin teaches an aluminum casting part with good strength properties (column 1 lines 14-17) formed from aluminum alloy with 5-10% Si, 0.25-0.6% Mg, 0.1-1.5% Cu, 0.01-1% of one or more of Zr, Ti, and Mn (column 2 lines 31-40), which overlaps or touches the boundary of the presently

claimed ranges of Si, Mg, Cu, Ti, Zr, Fe, Mn, Zn, and Ni of claims 1, 2, 4, 7-11, 15, 16, 18).

Concerning the amended claim language of “no vanadium is added to said alloy”, Dulin does not require the presence of V. Because Dulin teaches an overlapping alloy composition, it is held that Dulin has created a prima facie case of obviousness of the presently claimed invention.

Overlapping ranges have been held to be a prima facie case of obviousness, see MPEP § 2144.05.

Concerning the equation in claims 6 and 20, Dulin teaches ranges of Mg and Cu that meet said limitation.

Concerning product by process claim 12, Dulin teaches a solution heating, quenching, and artificially aging heat treatment temper applied to said Al-Si alloy (column 2 lines 41-63), which qualifies as a peak strength T6 type temper.

Concerning product claim 13, because Dulin teaches said alloy is used for high strength structural component castings (column 4 lines 16-17), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to cast the alloy taught by Dulin into a cylinder head or crankcase, substantially as presently claimed.

Concerning new claims 22 and 23, Dulin does not specify the creep strain. However, because Dulin teaches an overlapping alloy composition, foundry cast, as well as the instant heat treatment temper, then substantially the same creep resistance is expected for the alloy of Dulin as for the instantly claimed alloy.

Response to Arguments

5. In the response filed on February 23, 2009, applicant amended claims 1, 11, 23, and submitted various arguments traversing the rejections of record. The examiner agrees that no new matter has been added (in particular concerning "no vanadium is added to said alloy", see [0016] combined with the examples of the invention).
6. As previously stated, applicant has overcome the rejections in view of JP'244, the examiner agrees that JP'244 does not teach or suggest a Al-Si alloy complete with the instant Fe maximum.
7. As previously stated, the declaration under 37 CFR 1.132 filed 4/27/2007 (along with the arguments filed 4/6/2007) was sufficient to overcome the rejection of claims 1-20 based upon FR'927. The examiner agrees that FR'927 teaches a range of V outside the instant claims.
8. However, said declaration filed 4/27/2007 together with the declaration under 37 CFR 1.132 filed 2/23/2009 is insufficient to overcome the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 23 based upon SU'633 or Dulin as set forth in the last Office action because: declarant has not shown unexpected results with respect to the specific applied art of Dulin or SU'633.
9. More particularly, the Final Office Action mailed 11/21/2008 at item 6 mentioned two (primary) reasons why said declaration was deficient. Declarant addresses the second reason by stating, along with an explanation, that the unexpected result shown by example of the invention in the 'prior declaration' i.e. the declaration filed 2/23/2009 (Alloy C: 7.10% Si, 0.15% Fe, 0.37% Mg, 0.14% Ti, 170ppm Sr, 0.49% Cu, 0.14% Zr- see specification at examples as well as said declaration) is commensurate in scope/expected to behave in the same manner as the

claimed ranges (an alloy consisting of 5-11% Si, at most 0.3% Fe, 0.25-0.5% Mg, 0.3-1.5% Cu, 0.05-0.25% Ti, 0.05-0.25% Zr, <0.4% Mn, <0.3% Zn, <0.4% Ni, other <0.10% each, <0.30% total, remainder aluminum). However, the first reason mentioned at item 6 of the Final Office Action mailed 11/21/2008 has not been resolved/addressed. Applicant's/declarant's position seems to be that the unexpected results comparing alloys B (comparison) and C (which declarant has stated is representative of the claimed alloying ranges), shows the addition of Zr to said alloy leads to an unexpected improvement of high temperature creep resistance. However, it is unclear how/why the comparison example B is representative of the closest applied prior art of Dulin or SU'633 (clearly, applicant cannot argue criticality of the claimed ranges as only one comparative example is given, nor does said comparison appear to be a direct comparison with Dulin or SU'633).

Evidence of unexpected properties may be in the form of a direct or indirect comparison of the claimed invention with the closest prior art which is commensurate in scope with the claims. See *In re Boesch*, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980) and MPEP §716.02(d) - § 716.02(e). With respect to said indirect comparison, applicant a) may compare the claimed invention with prior art that is more closely related to the invention than the prior art relied upon by the examiner, *In re Holladay*, 584 F.2d 384, 199 USPQ 516 (CCPA 1978); *Ex parte Humber*, 217 USPQ 265 (Bd. App. 1961), or b) show criticality of the instant range. To establish unexpected results over a claimed range, applicants should compare a sufficient number of tests both inside and outside the claimed range to show the criticality of the claimed range. *In re Hill*, 284 F.2d 955, 128 USPQ 197 (CCPA 1960).

10. Applicant/declarant's argument that the present invention is allowable over the prior art of record because the amounts of V and misch metal taught by SU'633 are excluded by the instant claim has not been found persuasive. As set forth above, SU'633 teaches a minimum of 0.1% MM and 0.1% V, which is held to be a close approximation of <0.10% MM and <0.1% V (an alloy with 0.1% MM is expected to have substantially the same properties as an alloy with 0.099% MM, which falls within the instant claim, same goes for V). Further, amended claim 1

refers to “no vanadium is added to said alloy”. Declarant states at item 6 in declaration filed 2/23/2009 that a) “if V is not added, in the claimed alloy only impurity levels of V could ever be present, which in primary alloys is < 0.03% each” as well as b) “even though the claims state that other elements can be <0.1 each and <0.3 total, I would understand this language that V would necessarily be at impurity level with is <0.03% [appears to be typo, 0.03 V may be intended]. Since SU ‘633 consciously adds V to their alloy, there is simply no overlap with the present claims”. However, the original specification or claims do not mention a maximum (impurity) of 0.03% V is intended by “no vanadium is added to said alloy”, and said limitation is not read into the instant claim. Therefore, the examiner maintains her position as stated above that 0.1% V taught by SU’633, is held to be a close approximation of <0.1% V, which is allowed by the instantly amended claim language (an alloy with 0.1% V is expected to have substantially the same properties as an alloy with 0.099% V, which falls within the instant claim, same goes for MM). Additionally, the examiner points out that whether or not an element is intentionally added or present as an impurity, the instant claim allows “other elements < .10 each and 0.30 total”.

A prima facie case of obviousness exists where the claimed ranges and prior art ranges do not overlap but are close enough that one skilled in the art would have expected them to have the same properties. *Titanium Metals Corp. of America v. Banner*, 778 F.2d 775, 227 USPQ 773 (Fed. Cir. 1985) (Court held as proper a rejection of a claim directed to an alloy of “having 0.8% nickel, 0.3% molybdenum, up to 0.1% iron, balance titanium” as obvious over a reference disclosing alloys of 0.75% nickel, 0.25% molybdenum, balance titanium and 0.94% nickel, 0.31% molybdenum, balance titanium.), see MPEP 2144.05.

11. Applicant/declarant’s argument that the present invention is allowable over the prior art of record of Dulin because the prior art is drawn to a different type of product from the instant Al-Si casting alloy has not been found persuasive. The motivation to cast the Al-Si alloy into a cylinder head or crankcase (instant claim 13) is as follows: because Dulin teaches said alloy is

used for high strength structural component castings (column 4 lines 16-17), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to cast the alloy taught by Dulin into a cylinder head or crankcase, substantially as presently claimed. Further, declarant has not shown specific evidence that the alloy of Dulin is inferior/incapable of being cast into a cylinder head, motivated for the reasons above.

12. Applicant/declarant's argument that the present invention is allowable over the prior art of record because there is a) no motivation to select Zr from the markush group taught by the prior art or b) no motivation to select 0.05-0.25% from the broader range of 0.01-1.0% has not been found persuasive. It is prima facie obvious to substitute equivalents known for the same purpose, see MPEP 2144.06. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select Zr from the markush group taught by Dulin, because Dulin teaches Zr is a suitable element to provide the predictable result of grain refining and hardening. With respect to selecting the claimed narrow range from that of the prior art, overlapping ranges have been held to be a prima facie case of obviousness, see MPEP § 2144.05. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select any portion of the range, including the claimed range, from the broader range disclosed in the prior art, because the prior art finds that said composition in the entire disclosed range has a suitable utility. Additionally, "The normal desire of scientists or artisans to improve upon what is already generally known provides the motivation to determine where in a disclosed set of percentage ranges is the optimum combination of percentages," *In re Peterson*, 65 USPQ2d at 1379 (CAFC 2003). With respect to the broad overlap which completely encompasses the claimed range, applicant has not shown specific criticality or unexpected results.

Once a reference teaching product appearing to be substantially identical is made the basis of a rejection, and the examiner presents evidence or reasoning tending to show inherency, the burden shifts to the applicant to show an unobvious difference. "[T]he PTO can require an applicant to prove that the prior art products do not necessarily or inherently possess the characteristics of his [or her] claimed product. Whether the rejection is based on inherency' under 35 U.S.C. 102, on prima facie obviousness' under 35 U.S.C. 103, jointly or alternatively, the burden of proof is the same, and its fairness is evidenced by the PTO's inability to manufacture products or to obtain and compare prior art products." *In re Best*, 562 F.2d 1252, 1255, 195 USPQ 430, 433-34 (CCPA 1977)), see MPEP 2112. Applicant has not clearly shown an unobvious difference between the instant invention and the prior art's product (unexpected creep resistance by virtue of the instantly claimed selection of alloying ranges, etc).

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Janelle Morillo whose telephone number is (571) 272-1240. The examiner can normally be reached on 7:30 am- 4:00 pm Mon-Wed.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on (571) 272-1244. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Roy King/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit
1793

/J. M./
Examiner, Art Unit 1793
March 23, 2009